

Paul Cuffee School

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Annual Meeting

November 17, 2011

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Paul Cuffee School was held on November 17, 2011 at the Paul Cuffee Elementary School in Providence, Rhode Island.

Present: Su Almeida, Darline Berrios, David Burnham, Russell Carey, John Cariati, Tom Chen, Stefano Crema, Dorothy Fields, Robert Kelley, Keith S. Mathews, Alex Molina, Maria Monteiro, Joop Nagtegaal, Martha Newcomb, Dorothy Patrick, Carolyn Pemberton, Ana-Cecilia Rosado, Babak Taleghani.

Excused: Allyn Copp, Leanne Nyakhoon, Earl Smith.

Paul Cuffee Staff Present: Jonathan Conklin, Becky Coustan, Annmarie DeBrito, Julia Karahalidis, Michael Obel-Omia, Nell Sears, Suzie Shaw.

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. with a moment of silence. President Joop Nagtegaal began by welcoming everyone to the meeting. He remarked on the wonderful event held at the School immediately prior to the Board meeting which benefitted the Rhode Island Food Bank.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 15, 2011 meeting of the Board were approved unanimously. The motion to approve was made by Robert Kelley and seconded by Dorothy Patrick.

Head of School Report

Mr. Obel-Omia reviewed several items from his report, circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting. He noted that Treasurer Gina Raimondo visited the school earlier in the week, and was very impressed. The Paul Cuffee School Debate Team, which consists of students from the High School, is competing and doing very well. Mr. Chen's eight grade humanities students participated in a This I Believe essay project, with students spending a Saturday morning at the School to edit their final drafts for submission to WRNI. Open houses for admission are being held, and the process for submitting a grant to the EPA for funds to remediate and improve the former Living Room Property is underway. The League of Charter Schools remains focused on housing aid equity for charter schools as a top legislative priority this year. He concluded with an anecdote regarding Mr. Burnham addressing the High School Town Hall meeting earlier this week, and the respect and courtesy shown to him by the students. There has been a marked improvement in the culture at the High School this year and Michael thanked Becky Coustan and her staff for their leadership and hard work.

Julia Karahalidis reported that Champlin Foundation has funded a grant to purchase document cameras for the high school, which follows a \$250,000 grant for other improvements at the high school. The Annual Fund is progressing well, and a \$2000 grant was received from Staples, with gratitude to Bob Kelley for his support and assistance in securing that funding.

There were questions for Michael and Julia and discussion among the Board.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Babak Taleghani delivered the report of the Finance Committee. The Audit Report and Management Letter were accepted by the Committee, and the Audit went very well. He reviewed the school's loan covenant calculation and ratios, as well as discussion by the Committee regarding expenditures for some improvements to the gymnasium space utilized by the Middle School.

Committee on Trusteeship & Governance

Maria Monteiro and Stefano Crema delivered the report of the Committee, including the recommendation of the Committee that

Philip Gould be elected to the Board of Trustees. John Cariati moved that the recommendation of the Committee be approved, Babak Taleghani seconded, and it was approved unanimously. A draft position description for the President of the Board of Trustees was reviewed and discussed.

Charter School Renewal Process, Annual Report and RIDE Regulations

Michael opened the discussion of the Charter School Renewal Process and Annual Report. A site visit by representatives of RIDE is planned for January 23 – 25, 2012. An annual report, which includes a significant amount of detail, is in preparation as part of the renewal process. There is a particular focus on student achievement and compliance.

The new teacher evaluation process prescribed by RIDE is being implemented. Nell, Suzie and Becky discussed the process and implications for the School, in particular how it complements and contrasts with the evaluation process the School has had in place for some time. A great deal of time and effort will be involved in the process. Joop thanked Nell, Suzie and Becky for leading this discussion and their hard and great work.

New Business

There was no new business.

Adjournment

**Carolyn Pemberton moved to adjourn. Babak Taleghani seconded.
The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Russell C. Carey, Clerk